

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 665

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

DIA WASHDC

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

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3.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES SPEAKS TO THE NATION

REF: A) LISBON 4207; B) FBIS LONDON 302040Z

SUMMARY: PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES PAID TRIBUTE TO GENERAL SPINOLA, DISASSOCIATED HIMSELF FROM FORMER PRESIDENT'S PESSIMISTIC VIEWS AND SET OUT SOME GENERAL OUTLINES FOR THE FUTURE IN BRIEF SPEECH FOLLOWING HIS SWEARING-IN. HE PROMISED PORTUGAL WOULD RESPECT INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS, WITH EMPHASIS ON NATO. SPEECH DESIGNED TO REASSURE POPULATION THAT THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT (AFM), WHICH FULLY CONTROLS THE SITUATION, IS LINKED INSEPARABLY TO THE SOLID, STABLE PERSON OF THE ARMED FORCES CHIEF OF STAFF.

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END SUMMARY.

1. PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES FIRST WORDS FOLLOWING SWEARING-IN CEREMONY ON AFTERNOON SEPT. 30 WERE HALF-APOLOGETIC, PREMISING HIS ASSUMPTION OF THE PRESIDENCY ON THE NEED FOR ALL PORTUGUESE CITIZENS TO ASSUME THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES DURING A PERIOD OF GREAT DIFFICULTY FOR THE NATION. THIS EXCUSE/EXPLANATION PROVIDED, COSTA GOMES IMMEDIATELY WENT ON TO PAY TRIBUTE TO HIS PREDECESSOR, EMPHASIZING THAT HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES CONTINUE TO RELY ON GENERAL SPINOLA'S DEDICATION TO THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT'S CAUSE. COSTA GOMES REVEALED THAT HE HAD ATTEMPTED TO AVERT THE RESIGNATION OF HIS FRIEND AND COMRADE-IN-ARMS, WHOSE DEPARTURE FILLED HIM WITH SORROW.

2. WHILE CAREFUL TO HONOR SPINOLA, FULLY, COSTA GOMES WAS EQUALLY CAREFUL TO DISASSOCIATE HIMSELF FROM HIS PREDECESSOR'S GRIM VIEWS ON THE STATE OF AFFAIRS PREVAILING IN PORTUGAL (REF A). SPINOLA'S VIEWS CONSTITUTED A "PERSONAL AND SUBJECTIVE ANALYSIS" OF THE SITUATION. COSTA GOMES SPECIFICALLY DENIED THAT PORTUGUESE DECOLONIZATION POLICY HAS IN ANY WAY DEVIATED FROM THE AFM PROGRAM'S IDEALS. REJECTING "RIGIDLY PRECONCEIVED SCHEMES," HE STATED THAT PORTUGAL MUST BE GUIDED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ITS POLICIES ACCORDING TO CONSTANTLY CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES. AS FOR THE THREATS TO THE INTERNAL DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS WHICH SPINOLA LAMENTED, COSTA GOMES DID NOT ATTEMPT TO REFUTE ANYTHING HIS PREDECESSOR SAID. INSTEAD HE ASKED RHETORICALLY IF THERE WERE ANY OTHER REVOLUTION IN THE WORLD WHICH HAD MANAGED TO CHANGE SOCIETY SO PROFOUNDLY, YET WITH SO LITTLE BLOODSHED, PAIN OR GRAVE THREATS TO CIVIC ORDER. ACKNOWLEDGING THAT MUCH REMAINS TO BE DONE, COSTA GOMES PROMISED THAT IT WOULD BE DONE. THE WATCHWORDS ARE WORK, ORDER, UNITY AND DISCIPLINE.

3. BRIEFLY OUTLINING HIS GOALS FOR THE FUTURE, COSTA GOMES STRESSED THAT SOCIAL CONDITIONS MUST BE CREATED WHICH WILL PERMIT THE PORTUGUESE PUBLIC TO CHOOSE THEIR POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS WITHIN A PLURALISTIC DEMOCRATIC FRAMEWORK. OTHER MATTERS TOUCHED ON WERE:

A. DECOLONIZATION--THERE WILL BE DIFFERENT SOLUTIONS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FOR TIMOR, SAO TOME AND CAPE VERDE, BUT IN EACH CASE THE LOCAL POPULATIONS WILL FREELY EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS AND THIS CONSULTATION WILL PLAY A "DECISIVE" ROLE IN THE DECOLONIZATION PROCESS; IN REGARD TO MOZAMBIQUE THE GOP WILL CARRY OUT THE OBLIGATIONS IT ASSUMED AT LUSAKA; CURRENT POLICY WITH RESPECT TO ANGOLA WILL BE CONTINUED; AND MACAU HAS A "SPECIAL STATUS."

B) FOREIGN RELATIONS--COSTA GOMES PROMISED THAT PORTUGAL WOULD CONTINUE TO RESPECT THE PRINCIPLES OF INDEPENDENCE AND EQUALITY BETWEEN STATES, AND WILL FULFILL ITS INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS (REFERRING BY NAME ONLY TO NATO). HE EXPRESSED DESIRE TO RENEW DIPLOMATIC TIES WITH OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE THIRD WORLD.

4. ECHOING (FAINTLY) THE CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM GENERAL SPINOLA'S RESIGNATION SPEECH, COSTA GOMES ENDED BY EXPRESSING CONFIDENCE IN THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT, THE FUTURE OF LIBERTY AND ORDER IN PORTUGAL AND THE CERTAINTY OF BUILDING FOR A BETTER, MORE JUST AND DEMOCRATIC FUTURE.

5. COMMENT: GENERAL SPINOLA IS STILL IMMENSELY POPULAR IN PORTUGAL, AND COSTA GOME, LIKE ALL THOSE WHO HAVE COMMENTED ON THE FORMER PRESIDENT SINCE HIS RESIGNATION, HAS REFRAINED FROM CRITIZING HIM. AVERAGE PORTUGUESE, APPREHENSIVE AT NATION'S FUTURE AS RESULT OF SUDDEN SPINOLA RESIGNATION, PROBABLY REASSURED AT SELECTION OF COSTA GOMES AS NEW PRESIDENT. NO OTHER PERSON IN PORTUGAL TODAY CAN RIVAL HIM AS A SYMBOL OF LEVEL-HEADEDNESS, SOLIDITY AND MODERATENESS, AND ABOVE ALL AS GUARANTEE THAT REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE IS NOT ABOUT TO OVERWHELM THE COUNTRY.
SCOTT

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